

## EURASLIC PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Joan Baron Varley

Tuesday 16th October 2001, 1600hrs  
Meridienne Room, Le Quartz Conference Centre, Brest, France.

The last 18 months, as I am sure you will all appreciate, has been a very busy period for the Euraslic Board, and an incredibly busy time for the President.

### Election of New Executive Board Members

Firstly, you may all be wondering why there are no Euraslic Elections taking place at this Conference. The reason is that this Joint Conference falls six months short of the two year period of office for Executive Board Members, and all of the current members of the Board have kindly agreed to stay in post until the end of April 2002.

Immediately this Conference is over the procedures for electing a new Board will be initiated by the Secretary. Preparations are commencing during this Conference, in that our Secretary is seeking to identify suitable persons to serve on the Nominating Committee for the next Board, as well as the names of individuals who would be prepared to serve on the Board of Euraslic from May 2002.

### Overview

Euraslic membership currently comprises 79 members from 22 countries, including 66 Full Members (27 of whom are Joint IAMSLIC/Euraslic members), 11 Associate Members, and two Honorary Members, and I wish to take this opportunity to welcome all new members, and especially those who are attending their first Euraslic Conference.

The Association holds biennial meetings/conferences from which the *Proceedings* are produced and distributed free of charge to all Euraslic members and other conference participants. Other Euraslic publications include the Euraslic Leaflet and the *Euraslic Newsletter*, the latter being published and distributed free of charge to all members twice a year. Since April 2001 the *Newsletter*, thanks to the efforts of Sebastien Saunier, has also been available in electronic format.

Euraslic also maintains a comprehensive web site hosted by the National Centre for Marine Research (NCMR), Athens, Greece, a Discussion List moderated by Barbara Schmidt of the Institut für Meerskunde, Kiel, Germany, and an online *Directory of European Aquatic Libraries and Information Centres*, which is hosted on the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) web site.

Euraslic business is managed by an Executive Board on behalf of the Membership, and I am very pleased that so many members of the Board have been able to attend this Conference.

### **Joint Conference**

As members will appreciate, the work of the Board during this time has been dominated by preparations for this Joint Conference and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for their support in this respect, and especially our Secretary Ian Pettman, who has been responsible for attracting such a high number of participants through wide dissemination of the Conference literature, not only to Europe, but also extensively throughout Africa, as well as to other parts of the world, and our Treasurer, Michelle L'Excellent who has performed the crucial task of dealing with our sponsored participants, arranging tickets and deposits for accommodation etc.

I would also especially like to thank the French group, OMER - *eau mer*, for generously postponing their own National Group meeting so that it did not detract from the number of French participants at this Joint Conference, and special thanks to Marie-Pascale Baligand for her assistance, especially in identifying the French invited speakers and coordinating arrangements for them. I would also like to acknowledge the extensive support that my husband, Allen Varley, has given me during this busy time, and the work he has done in support of this Conference in relation to the translation of emails and the editing of various Conference literature.

Finally, thanks also go to David Hyett whose work will continue after the Conference, as he kindly agreed to be the Euraslic co-editor of the Joint Conference *Proceedings*.

### **Sponsorship**

For your information, the IOC agreed a grant of US\$5000 to Euraslic to be used to sponsor participants to attend, and Euraslic has almost matched this amount from our own reserves to enable as many members of Euraslic as possible to attend this Joint Conference. Details of how these funds have been used will be disseminated shortly after the Conference.

### **Special Discussion Sessions**

During the Conference in Aberdeen I received representations from some long-standing members of Euraslic with a view to addressing the broader needs of our members from Environment Institutes, and also to consider the setting up of a Special Interest Group for countries bordering the Mediterranean. The Board discussed ways in which we could accommodate these requests and the outcomes were some minor changes to the Euraslic Bylaws, which will be discussed in the Business Meeting, and more especially two special discussion sessions being held during this Joint Conference. A working group of

members from Eastern European institutes will also meet this week, and will report on matters of mutual concern and possible future action.

### **Working Groups**

Also at the Euraslic Business Meeting in Aberdeen, two working groups were set up to (a) review the Euraslic Bylaws, and (b) draft Guidelines for Euraslic Conferences. The recommended changes to the Bylaws were disseminated to members in the last issue of the *Euraslic Newsletter* and will be presented to the Members for ratification during the Business Meeting. The draft Guidelines for Euraslic Conferences have been distributed to Members via the Discussion List, and members will have an opportunity to comment on them during the Business Meeting.

### **Eighth Euraslic Conference, May 2000**

Looking back, I am pleased to inform you that the *Proceedings of the Eighth Euraslic Conference* in Aberdeen, May 2000, are now published and are currently being distributed, and I would like to thank Sarah Heath for her efforts in this respect as well as all others who assisted in the task.

### **Development of aquatic libraries and information provision in Europe**

I have had the benefit of previewing several of the country and institution reports submitted by Members to this Conference, and I thank all of those who have contributed reports.

The overall impression that I gained from them was fairly positive.

- In many of our longstanding member countries they are working hard improving or developing national networks, capitalising on the use of electronic networks and the Internet.
- Libraries appear to be acquiring better equipment and access to resources via cooperative agreements and grants from international organisations, although for some the progress is still slow, and there is still a long way to go.
- I strongly believe that membership of Euraslic has been a catalyst in many of these developments, providing members with contacts and links within and beyond their own borders; and our Association is uniquely placed now to capitalise on these developments.

I believe that Euraslic as a group can achieve much more in increasing the cross-border collaboration between national and regional networks, and in their contribution to international groups. Members of Euraslic have been involved in cooperative projects before, and during the course of this Conference and afterwards, I would very much like to see discussions on the direction we should be moving in the future, and receiving

suggestions and proposals from Members. As noted earlier, almost all of our efforts over the past eighteen months have been channelled into this Joint Conference, and whilst this has been a very worthwhile collaboration, in the coming months I would like to see the Association examining its role in the broader European and International scene, and discussing collaboration with a wider range of both European and International organisations, groups and networks.